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FILE



USIA

July 11, 1984

Dear Mr. Casey: 19 JUL 1984

I thought you would be interested in two recent news pieces which look at the positive initiatives and accomplishments of USIA.

Attached for your information is an essay about the work of the Agency written by Dr. Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. The Commission has recently sent the article to newspapers across the United States for possible use on op-ed pages.

Also attached is the transcript of a commentary by Bruce Herschensohn which was aired on KABC-TV on June 26, 1984. As you can see, both pieces are highly supportive of our work.

Sincerely,

James A. Bryant
Director, Public Liaison

The Honorable
William J. Casey
Director
Central Intelligence Agency



L-2105

WHAT'S GOING ON AT USIA?

By Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.

Few would question that there are times when secret diplomacy is necessary. Our diplomats cannot begin negotiations by announcing to the newspaper everything we want. Closed-door negotiations obviously have their place.

But public diplomacy has an equally essential role. We know from sometimes painful experience that how the U.S. is viewed by other countries may determine their policies and affect the success of our own. It is the function of the United States Information Agency -- the public diplomacy arm of our government -- to explain the actions and policies of the American people to an often skeptical world.

This is no small task. Its importance exceeds its magnitude, however, and USIA deserves more support than it received from previous administrations. USIA has put conservatives in a peculiar position -- arguing for increased funding. Its fiscal year 1984 budget is \$664 million, a 45-percent increase since FY 1981, the last budget of the Carter Administration. In real dollars, USIA's funding is approaching its peak level of the mid-60s.

Still, my colleagues and I on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy came to agree with Under Secretary of Defense Fred Ikle, who said that a marginal hundred million dollars for public diplomacy can do more for U.S. national security than it can in the Pentagon or the State Department.

In fact, the USIA, with its 7,737 staffers, does a lot for a little.

Perhaps its best-known program is the Voice of America. Only a few months ago, the Voice of America sent a message from President Reagan live into the Soviet Union, shortcircuiting their state propaganda services and making the case for peace directly to the Soviet people.

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But the Voice of America is neither all politics nor one-sided. Its "Viewpoint" series, for example, presents commentaries from a wide range of ideological perspectives, as well as effective editorial statements of U.S. Government policy which are clearly identified and separated from news broadcasts.

The Voice of America has branched into new language services including Amharic, Azerbaijani and Pashto, addressing the needs of formerly ignored places like Afghanistan.

Equally impressive is VOA's modernization program. When the Reagan appointees took over, some VOA outposts were broadcasting with antique transmitters captured from the Germans in World War II. Now, with research on direct satellite broadcasting well underway, and with new transmitters and other equipment coming on line, operations are being brought up to date.

USIA is addressing other needs as well. The Reagan Administration, working closely with Senators Charles Percy (R-IL) and Claiborne Pell (D-RI), substantially increased funding for the Fulbright program, the International Visitors program and the Hubert H. Humphrey North-South Fellowship Program.

Another program, the President's Youth Exchange Initiative is a major effort to reach the younger generation in Western Europe and Japan. Private sector contributions from the President's Council for International Youth Exchange now total \$2.5 million, and the program has received more than \$35 million in free advertising donated by the Advertising Council.

USIA publishes and distributes overseas more than half a million books annually and is looking at ways to expand its book programs.

One of USIA's most exciting new programs is "Worldnet," a global television broadcasting system that brings Cabinet-level policymakers in Washington live via satellite to overseas audiences. Interviewed in USIA's studios by influential journalists overseas, their views will reach some 50-plus receiving stations by the end of this year.

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"Worldnet" offers great promise for a world where more and more people get their news from television. Also, it shows potential explaining American society, culture and values, through international teleconferencing.

Bringing USIA into the 1980s and carefully managing its resources has clearly paid off in victories for American policy. For just a few examples, one can look to the role USIA played in the successful deployment of intermediate range nuclear missiles in Europe, or in the special session of the UN Security Council which investigated the shooting down of the Korean airliner -- where the first television show ever aired in the Security Council was produced by USIA.

In all fairness, the great bulk of these successes can be largely attributed to the energy and skill of USIA's Director, Charles Z. Wick.

Yet, for a variety of reasons, in Congress and in the press, Wick, something of an impresario with an unorthodox style of management, has been the center of tempestuous controversy. It is, however, a tempest in a teapot.

First, it was disclosed that in 1983, Director Wick tape recorded some telephone conversations. After extensive inquiries by the press, legislative and executive agencies, and after a formal apology, it became clear that, far from being clandestine or malicious, the tapings were done only for managerial efficiency. It was not a smart move in post-Watergate Washington, but not exactly a hanging offense either.

Next, the press charged USIA with "kiddiegate" -- hiring the offspring of Administration officials. There were no examples of incompetency. Children of appointees, on average, are probably no better or worse than any other employees. Also, should such children be disqualified because of their parents? The answer is obvious.

The third and most serious sounding charge is the maintenance of a so-called blacklist of USIA overseas speakers (Amparts). The Agency sends about 500 speakers abroad each year to advocate U.S. Government policies, or to foster discussion on economics, U.S. politics, science, technology and culture.

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In the past two-and-a-half years 5,000 people were considered for USIA's speaker programs. Selections are made on such non-ideological grounds as program needs, available funds, and speaker quality, availability, and program relevance. USIA's Office of Inspection found the Agency's program staff had compiled a list of 95 rejected speakers.

First of all, historical precedent and simple logic suggest that it is good to select some speakers who can explain and defend U.S. Government policies. As Senator Pell recently commented, "I think it would be very foolish, for example, for me to go on a trip to defend President Reagan's foreign policy because I disagree with so much of it . . . I think any administration has the right to send people abroad who more or less reflect the general view of that Administration."

Even so, what kind of "blacklist" was it? Included in the "blacklist" was former Congressman Clair Burgener of California -- former chairman of the Republican Study Committee, the conservative coalition in the House of Representatives.

Others on the list had employers who would not let them accept government-sponsored invitations. Still others actually participated in the program. As such things go, one could hardly call it a blacklist.

The bottom line is that the achievements of USIA and its Director, Charles Wick, are real and impressive.

The controversies which swirled around USIA over the past year have receded into the limbo of yesterday's minor stories. The accomplishments remain.

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Dr. Feulner is Chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and President of The Heritage Foundation.

BRUCE HERSCHENSOHN COMMENTARY
KABC-TV NEWS: POLITICAL ANALYST
JUNE 26, 1984 6:00 P.M.

THE CRITICISM AGAINST CHARLES WICK WON'T STOP AND THAT'S BECAUSE HE'S AN EASY TARGET, NO MATTER WHAT HE DOES--OR DOESN'T DO. FIRST, BEING A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE PRESIDENT, HE'S VERY VISIBLE. AND SECOND, AND MOST IMPORTANT, AS DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY, HIS WORK...IS INVISIBLE IN THIS COUNTRY.

ASK ANYONE ON THE STREET IF CHARLES WICK HAS DONE A GOOD OR A BAD JOB AS DIRECTOR OF THE U.S.I.A. AND THEY WOULD PROBABLY SHRUG BECAUSE HIS JOB PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN GIVEN VIRTUALLY NO PRESS ATTENTION AT ALL. BUT GO OVERSEAS WHERE THE EVIDENCE OF HIS WORK IS HARBORED, AND HIS WORK HAS NOT ONLY BEEN GOOD; IT'S BEEN ONE OF THE BEST CHAPTERS IN THE 31-YEAR HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY...AN AGENCY ENGAGED IN THE WAR OF IDEAS; WITHOUT MOST OF THE UNITED STATES KNOWING THAT IT'S GOING ON.

WITH A FRACTION OF THE BUDGET OF THE SOVIET UNION'S PROPAGANDA MINISTRY, CHARLES WICK HAS PUT US AHEAD OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE USE OF A TELEVISION TECHNOLOGY...TO COUNTER SOVIET PROPAGANDA. THROUGH A SYSTEM HE CALLS "WORLD-NET," HE INAUGURATED A CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION NETWORK ALLOWING FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WITHIN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, TO QUESTION U.S. POLICYMAKERS HERE IN THE U.S., IN ONE-HOUR TELEVISION INTERVIEWS. THE FIRST PROGRAM GAVE FOREIGN JOURNALISTS A CHANCE TO QUESTION AMBASSADOR JEANE KIRKPATRICK. LATER IT WAS PRESIDENT REAGAN AND HENRY KISSINGER, AND SECRETARY SHULTZ AND VICE-PRESIDENT BUSH. THESE PROGRAMS GO ON TWICE A WEEK NOW...AND NEXT YEAR, IF HE GETS HIS WAY...ONCE A DAY. NOTHING LIKE IT HAS BEEN DONE BEFORE AND IT GIVES AN IMMEDIATE PERSONAL, UNREHEARSED OPPORTUNITY TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS TO TALK TO U.S. POLICY-MAKERS AND OPINION-LEADERS. EVEN THE VERY LEFT-WING NEWSPAPER IN ITALY, "MANIFESTO," RAVED ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION U.S. OFFICIALS IN THAT WAY.

FURTHER, WICK'S TELEVISION PRODUCTION, "LET POLAND BE POLAND," SET A RECORD IN WORLD LEADERS COMING TOGETHER EXPRESSLY FOR AN INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION AUDIENCE TO GIVE ONE UNITED OPINION ABOUT THAT SOVIET SATELLITE'S GOVERNMENT. FIFTEEN WORLD LEADERS CAME TOGETHER WITHIN THAT PRESENTATION AND IT WAS SEEN IN OVER 50 COUNTRIES.

IN TERMS OF PUBLICATIONS, A MONTHLY MAGAZINE ON SOVIET PROPAGANDA IS NOW SENT TO OUR OWN OFFICERS ABROAD, ALONG WITH REBUTTAL TO SPECIFIC SOVIET DISINFORMATION. IT GIVES THEM ANSWERS.

AS FAR AS RADIO IS CONCERNED, THE "VOICE OF AMERICA" HAS BEEN UPGRADED IN TERMS OF BOTH FACILITIES AND LISTENERSHIP...INCLUDING RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING INTO THE SOVIET UNION.

THERE'S A LOT MORE AND I'M SAYING ALL THIS FOR ONE REASON: SCANDAL IS THE MEAT OF THE WASHINGTON PRESS CORPS...THEY LOVE IT. THIS KIND OF STUFF THAT I'M TALKING ABOUT IS A BORE TO THEM. BUT IT'S THIS...KIND OF..."STUFF" THAT MAKES A REAL IMPACT ON WORLD-AUDIENCES...AND THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HEAR ABOUT IT. AND I BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS GREAT REASON TO BE THANKFUL THAT CHARLES WICK IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY, BECAUSE THE WAR OF IDEAS IS GOING ON EVERY DAY AND TODAY'S IMPACT WILL AFFECT OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD...AND OUR INFLUENCE...FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.